OPRAH WAS HERE
(and we’re still feeling the magic!)
Of all the places on campus you’d expect to find a garden brimming with kale, Swiss chard and collard greens, the second floor of University Crossing probably isn’t one. But thanks to a collaboration between the university and Lowell-based urban farming nonprofit Mill City Grows, there’s a new rooftop vegetable garden outside the windows of the busy second-floor landing at the student and administrative center. UML’s hope is that the space helps educate passersby about the university’s Urban Agriculture Program. Producing fresh, leafy vegetables for the university community is an added bonus.

URBAN OASIS
It’s been several months, but we’re still basking in the glow of Oprah Winfrey’s visit to campus. You can read all about it starting on page 34, in our behind-the-scenes look at what it took to host one of the most influential and respected women in the world. I am so grateful to the entire UMass Lowell community for your support of this once-in-a-lifetime event for the university. A special thanks goes to the team that managed this historic occasion.

We were truly stunned when Oprah announced her plan to match the revenue we raised for student scholarships through sponsorships and ticket sales. She was clearly touched by our university, our community and our mission. As she said that evening, “Education is the only way to change lives.” Well, she certainly won the hearts and minds of those in attendance, and her impact will be felt here for years.

The rest of this issue of the UML Magazine is packed with stories about the good work being done by our campus community, from students and faculty to alumni and partners. For example, I hope you feel the same pride as I did when you read about the critical role our UMass Lowell alumni had in the recovery of the gas disaster in the Merrimack Valley; see more on page 20.

As we start our 125th academic year (watch for a special anniversary issue of this magazine next spring!), I’m confident the UMass Lowell community will continue to find new ways to triumph and surprise people. Turn the page to see how we already are!

Sincerely,

Jacquie Moloney ’75, ’92
When Barry Perry ‘68, ‘15 (H) was a plastics engineering student, the buildings on North Campus still housed machinery used to train students for careers in the textile industry. Perry says he can still hear the thrum of the machines and conjure up the humidity that hung in the air, and how it felt against his skin.

He was back on campus in April to celebrate the grand reopening of Perry Hall, the North Campus building where future generations of engineers will prepare for careers in such emerging disciplines as biomanufacturing and clean energy.

The building was closed for over 18 months to undergo a $50 million renovation. Perry, a longtime supporter of research, academics and scholarships at UML, helped set the work in motion with a $1.25 million gift in 2012.

“It’s a great honor for our family to give this type of opportunity to students,” said Perry, who began his career at General Electric before becoming chairman and CEO of New Jersey-based Engelhard Corp. Known as the Engineering Building when it opened in 1952, Perry Hall has long been a hub of research and innovation. The building had become dated, however, and a 2012 fire forced the closure of the fourth floor. The renovation included a total reconstruction of the interior.

The new space features labs for teaching and research in biomedical, chemical and environmental engineering, biomanufacturing and clean energy, as well as rooms to support expanding industry partnerships.

Are goats the new G.O.A.T.s?

Goats are all the rage lately—from goat yoga and goat therapy to goat parties—and UML is nothing if not on trend. A few days before finals week kicked off in May, the university’s student wellness team staged a baby animal petting zoo as part of Stress Relief Day. Hundreds of students stopped by to scratch ears and snuggle fur. “Aw, he’s sooooo cute!” was heard approximately 8,943 times.

Amazon is everywhere…

Amazon is everywhere…including on UML’s campus, where nearly 80 percent of student packages come in those famous brown boxes. The university installed Amazon Lockers on South and East campuses as part of a larger effort to streamline how students get mail on campus.

Screen Time, from a Guy Who Knows

That’d be our computer science alumnus Rich Miner ‘86, ‘89, ‘97, the Google Ventures founder and Android co-founder whom we profiled recently in UML sister magazine Elements of Science. Ironically, when it comes to his two young children, Miner has a cautious view of technology. “My kids have very limited screen time…” he says. “Kids should be out playing, drawing with real paper and crayons, using scissors and glue to build things like models.”

Out in Front

During CNN’s town hall with presidential candidate Bernie Sanders on April 22, Nick Trisk, a clinical lab sciences junior in the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences, was given the first question. He asked Sanders how he intends to phase out private health insurance companies for his “Medicare for All” plan. “Excellent question!” Sanders said, before providing an impassioned and lengthy and detailed response.
Friends in Business

Kronos CEO Aron Ain (pictured at right, with Chancellor Jacqueline Moloney) may be one of UMass Lowell’s biggest fans. Ain, who leads the $1.4 billion workforce management software company, had high praise for the university at an event this spring celebrating UML’s partnership with businesses. Kronos and Raytheon were honored as the university’s top two industry partners. “I tell other CEOs in the Boston area that Kronos won’t compete with them for MIT and Harvard graduates. We don’t need to—we have UMass Lowell,” Ain told the crowd. Kronos has endowed scholarships and maintains internships and co-op programs for UML students. In turn, the university provides a pipeline of talent for the company, which has hired as many as 300 UML graduates. “Without UMass Lowell, we wouldn’t be as successful as we are,” Ain said.

CHALK TALK

Anna Dugan ’13, a graduate of the Art & Design program, was invited back to campus to be the first artist to render chalk designs on two of the historic state blackboards (circa 1907) that were uncovered during the renovation of Coburn Hall. The restored blackboards are now hinged in the basement of Coburn Hall, available for use by art students and faculty. An illustrator and photographer, Dugan has built a budding working artist. See her work on Instagram: “annadidathing.”

A decade ago, when Siegel and his crew were looking for signs of life in the basement, they found three neon columns of dollar bills, $5 bills and a couple of higher denominations—in all, 41 bills totaling $134—mounted on the back of a boiler on the floor.” He says.

Our World

The professors’ efforts recently got a boost with a $12,500 grant from Mass Humanities, an independent programming and funding organization. The website, which will be called the Library of New England Immigration, will be officially unveiled in the coming months and will be part of the UMass Lowell Library’s online resources. Initially, it will focus on Lowell immigration, especially over the past 50 years, but it will broaden to include all of New England over time, says Forrant.

New Website Documents History of Immigration in Lowell

It will soon be much easier to research the paths of immigrants who arrived in Lowell, thanks to a project spearheaded by History Prof. Robert Forrant and Asst. Prof. Ingrid Hess of Art & Design. With the help of a team of UML students, they have gathered and curated hundreds of photographs, videos and essays, building a unique website that is designed to make it easier for teachers, students, academics and researchers to access a historically significant part of Lowell’s DNA—the arrivals of waves of immigrants calling the city its new home.

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When she graduated with a double major in electrical engineering and computer science in 2016, Rajia Abdelaziz (along with business partner Raymond Hamilton ’17) had already secured thousands of dollars for the company the pair started with students. She turned down impressive job offers (sorry, Google) to continue to grow her start-up invisaWear. The company makes smart necklaces, bracelets and keychains that aren’t a reliable source of protection. After looking at products online, everything was a big, ugly panic button—and, frankly, too ugly for even my grandmother to want to wear. I had been programming wearable devices while working at Amazon the summer prior to our company launch and decided to create invisaWear for my winter project. Before I knew it, everyone wanted it!

WHAT WAS THEREA PARTICULAR MOMENT WHEN YOU KNEW YOU NEEDED TO DO THIS? One night after an event. I was walking back to my car when a car full of guys pulled down the window and started yelling inappropriately at me. The car stopped and one of the guys started to get out. Although my phone was with me, I didn’t have enough time to call the police or friends who were still inside, all the event, less than a block away. Luckily, I was able to run and get into my car, unharmed. However, in that moment, I promised myself I was going to do everything in my power to make sure no other woman has to feel so alone and afraid.

WHAT’S THE MOST UNEXPECTED THING THAT HAPPENED ALONG THE WAY? I never in a million years expected this many heartfelt messages from women who’ve get into my car, unharmed. However, in that moment, I promised myself I was going to do everything in my power to make sure no other woman has to feel so alone and afraid. Questions with Rajia Abdelaziz ’16, co-founder of invisaWear

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The Future’s So Bright, They Gotta Wear Shades

When you’re one of the fastest-growing public doctoral universities in the country, Commencement can’t be confined to just one day. For the first time in university history, UMass Lowell held three Commencement ceremonies this year—one for Ph.D. and master’s students, and two for undergraduate students the following day.

The expanded ceremonies helped accommodate UML’s largest graduating class ever—more than 4,500 students—and the thousands of guests who celebrated their achievements at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell.

If the Class of 2018 is an indication, the achievements will keep coming for their successors. Within six months of last year’s graduation, 96 percent of the class was either working or enrolled in graduate school.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **3** Commencement Ceremonies
- **4,500+** Diplomas handed out
- **695** Students with the most popular major, business administration
- **$116,500** Amount raised for student emergency funds at the annual Commencement Eve Celebration
- **113** Countries our new grads represent
- **18,000** Guests at ceremonies
- **1,003,565** The number of likes, shares, and comments on UML’s Commencement Facebook, Instagram and Twitter posts
- **17,180** Total views of the three ceremonies’ livestreams across 10 countries
- **4.0 100+** Number of students who graduated with a perfect 4.0 GPA
- **Infinity** Number of high-fives given by Rowdy the River Hawk

U.S. Mint Launches Lowell Quarter—with UML’s Help

If she was lucky, a Lowell mill girl earned two quarters for a day of hard labor. Now, their part in the American story is memorialized on a special edition of the U.S. quarter.

The coin, part of the “America the Beautiful” series, bears a design on its flip side of the Lowell National Historical Park. A ceremony in February to unveil the coin, which features an early 1900s mill girl loading a loom’s bobbin battery, drew hundreds of schoolchildren, educators, public officials and representatives of the university, the National Park Service and the Mint.

The Lowell quarter was the culmination of a decade’s worth of work by Ellen Anstey ’08, manager of administration and engagement at the Tsongas Industrial History Center (TIHC), a partnership between UMass Lowell’s College of Education and Lowell National Historical Park.

“These quarter designs show the importance of place,” says Anstey. “They’re also an educational tool.”

The Mint used lesson plans that TIHC staff developed to create a resource booklet and website for teachers.

Lowell National Historical Park was selected for the coin by popular vote via an online ballot, beating dozens of other federal sites around the state, including Boston’s Freedom Trail, Concord’s Minute Man National Historical Park and the Cape Cod National Seashore.

Professor Aims to Solve Mercury Mystery

The National Science Foundation has awarded a three-year, $873,000 grant to a research project led by Prof. Daniel Obrist, chairman of the Department of Earth, Environmental and Atmospheric Sciences, to study mercury pollution in forests.

Mercury gets deposited in forests through rainfall and vegetation uptake, which can transfer it to the soil and subsequently transfer it to the air when the plants die, thereby cycles. Obrist, professor of Columbia University, is to better understand what Obrist describes as a “vegetation pump” process and to take direct measurements of the movement of mercury at two sites—Harvard University Forest in Petersham, Mass.; and the Texas A&M Soltis Center in central Costa Rica.

According to Obrist, measurements are strongly limited to polluted sites or for data gathering over short periods of time. “Our goal is to study mercury,” Obrist said, noting that “we have a better idea for one full year each, gyung the first such record in forests.” He says, understanding the distribution of mercury is important because the heavy metal is a highly neurotoxic environmental pollutant that threatens wildlife, birds, mammals and humans worldwide.
During the university’s third annual Days of Giving, donors didn’t just exceed expectations—they roared past them. On April 9-10, over 3,300 members of the UML community—including students, faculty, staff, alumni, family members and friends—made contributions online and at regional events, raising a record $420,500 for their favorite programs, colleges, clubs and sports teams. About 1,100 alumni were responsible for over a third of that—marking a 50 percent bump in the number of alumni who participated, as compared to last year. Support was particularly strong for student scholarships. Athletics also scored a big win with its challenge to attract 425 donations—one for each of the university’s 425 Division I athletes. When the buzzer sounded, more than 1,000 donors had given to different sports teams and to the Costello Gym renovation campaign, earning an additional $25,000 in challenge funds.

Six former River Hawks, including four new graduates, have signed professional hockey contracts. Defender Ani Belisha and co-captain forward Connor Wilson both signed with the Mulhouse Scorpions of the French Synerglass Ligue Magnus. They will play for former UML forward and two-time captain Yorick ‘Trille’ Treille ’02, the Scorpions’ head coach. Senior forwards Ryan Dmowski and Nick Master signed contracts with the Hartford Wolf Pack (AHL) and the Maine Mariners (ECHL), respectively. Junior co-captain Ryan Lohin and junior alternate captain Mattias Göransson chose to forgo their final seasons in Lowell to sign with the NHL’s Tampa Bay Lightning and Leksands IF in the Swedish Hockey League, respectively.

She’s Got the Beat
Recent graduate Maddie May Scott took her powerhouse drumming skills to the high seas with Melissa Etheridge’s star-studded spring cruise. Scott and her band, Flight of Fire, were invited to perform on the eight-day trip. A double major in music and languages (Spanish and French), Scott has kept the beat for the Boston-based hard rock band for the past two years. The Norwegian Cruise Line event featured performances by Etheridge, Shawn Colvin, Jill Sobule, Dar Williams, Joan Osborne, Lillie Mae and other well-known performers. For Scott, the gig was “a dream come true.” Winner of Best Live Act Award at the New England Music Awards last year, Flight of Fire has opened for such artists as Bon Jovi, J. Geils Band and Fitz and the Tantrums.
UML AND STATE CELEBRATE $1.2M IN ENERGY SAVINGS

Some of the energy-saving measures, like the 600-panel solar array atop the South Campus parking garage, are impossible to miss. Others, like occupancy sensors to control lighting in O’Leary and Lydon Libraries, are much more discreet.

Four years to the day after announcing the program, officials from UML and the state’s Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance marked its completion at an Earth Day celebration at University Crossing.

As the state’s largest Accelerated Energy Program site to date, the university implemented more than 150 energy-saving measures in 30 buildings across campus over the last three years. More than 6,000 pieces of mechanical equipment and lighting were updated or replaced, including the installation of a new solar hot water system at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center, new LED lighting at the Tsongas Center and Costello Athletic Center, and low-flow plumbing fixtures in residence halls.

As a result of these improvements, the university expects to see $1.2 million in annual energy savings. The upgrades will save 1.7 million gallons of water and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 9 million pounds each year. The AEP also eliminates $10 million in deferred maintenance across campus.

DCAMM Commissioner Carol Gladstone praised the university for its commitment to sustainability, adding that it has inspired her agency to raise the bar on sustainability, climate change and global warming in the projects it manages.

Young people are going to have to deal with what we haven’t dealt with,” she said. “So thank you for inspiring and exhorting us to do this, because we have to.”

NURSING STUDENTS WORK WITH COMMUNITIES ON ANTI-VAPING EFFORTS

Nursing students teamed up with local schools and public health officials in an effort to snuff out the growing epidemic of teen vaping.

As part of their course work, the students researched and developed anti-vaping campaigns.

Across the United States, vaping is surging among young people. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the proportion of high school seniors who reported recent vaping of nicotine jumped to 20.9 percent in 2018, up from 11 percent in 2017. In December 2018, the Office of the Surgeon General declared vaping a health epidemic.

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products. Studies show that nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain—which continues to develop until about age 25. It can impact learning, memory and attention.

The nursing students gave presentations on the harmful effects of vaping to high school students and parents and created posters and flyers for distribution.

“We are able to relate to the students, since we’re not that much older than they are. We understand the temptations and peer pressure, so our hope is that they will hear us and either don’t start vaping or stop,” says nursing student Joseph Bradstreet.

PITCHER PERFECT!

Senior Kaysee Talcik pitched the softball program’s first-ever perfect game in a 4-0 win at Stony Brook (N.Y.) on April 27. Talcik, a business administration major from Shelton, Conn., struck out five Seawolves in helping the River Hawks set a new Division I program record for single-season America East victories with 13. “I was very proud of Kaysee today,” said UML coach Danielle Henderson, whose team was vying for the top seed in the AE tournament.

It was the second no-hitter of Talcik’s career.

MOW TOWN

Welcome to “Ewe” Mass Lowell.

For three days this summer, the half acre of wild grass and weeds along VFW Highway—behind the Costello Athletic Center and Pinanski parking lot on North Campus—was the biggest all-you-can-eat salad bar on campus. The customers? A herd of 120 sheep, courtesy of Goats-To-Go out of Georgetown, Mass.

While contractors previously hired by UML have had to contend with angry bees, poison ivy and gopher holes as they weed-whacked the steep slope in the summer heat, the sheep feasted round the clock (inside temporary fencing) to do the job in less time—and at half the cost.

The sheep, which were brought back the following week to “mow” along Pawtucket Street on South Campus, are just the latest innovative technique introduced by Grounds Operations Manager Erik Shaw to maintain the university’s 150 acres of land. From increasing the use of organic fertilizers and compost on lawns, to improving irrigation and purchasing the university’s first battery-electric lawn mower, his efforts have helped make UML one of the highest-rated campuses for sustainability in the country.
"Everyone Has a Nurse in Their Lives"

The Bring Diversity to Nursing Scholarship ensures that as our communities grow more diverse, our nursing workforce will keep pace.

> BY BETH BROSNAN

At age 7, when other kids were glued to the Disney Channel, Taylor Chau was obsessed with medical documentaries. "I loved watching surgeries," she recalls. Yet when she decided to enroll at the Solomon School of Nursing, Chau's decision had as much to do with language and culture as it did with science.

After her grandmother was severely injured in a fall, Chau realized the hospital staff was having trouble communicating with him because he spoke only Cantonese. "My mother and I had to interpret for him," Chau says. "I chose nursing because I want to help bridge this kind of cultural divide."

Diomeri Diaz ’21 was on her way to becoming a welder when a similar family experience steered her toward nursing. "I was in vocational school when my grandmother, who's originally from the Dominican Republic, had a stroke," she recalls. For three weeks, Diaz sat in the hospital, watching bilingual nurses carefully tend to her grandmother, conversing with her and other family members in Spanish. "It really woke me up," she says. "I saw how breaking the language barrier improves health care."

Jacqueline Dowling, who directed UML's baccalaureate nursing program for 10 years until her retirement in 2016, couldn't agree more.

"Nurses who share cultural backgrounds with their patients are more likely to form better connections with them," she says. "And better connections lead to better health outcomes."

In 2008, concerned that the nursing workforce was not keeping pace with an increasingly diverse U.S. population, Dowling and other Solomont administrators launched the Bring Diversity to Nursing program. With $3 million in federal and state funding, they partnered with schools in Lowell and Lawrence to recruit more pre-nursing students from diverse backgrounds, and then provided them with the mentoring and financial support they needed to graduate.

By 2015, when the grant funding ended, 50 students from various cultural backgrounds had graduated from UML, and they were now working in local hospitals and clinics.

Dowling considers those results "pretty phenomenal"—and not just for the students. When the program began, she recalls, "We knew we had to become more culturally competent. But we didn't realize just how much we would learn from our students." She recalls how she once spent an hour trying to teach one of her Cambodian American students how to make a hospital bed correctly. "I finally asked her how she made a bed at home, and she explained that they always used pins." Dowling shakes her head. "How long did it take me to ask that question? That was my first lesson in dealing with cultural differences.

Another lesson learned: how reluctant students can be to ask for help, even in the face of major challenges. Take the student who was evicted from his apartment and slept in his car for two weeks but still kept up with all his studies. "Students here really want their education, and they work so hard to get it," she says.

"Getting the scholarship really helped lift some of the stress of paying for college," says Diaz, who has a part-time job at Market Basket and also works as a UMass Lowell resident assistant.

Says Chau, who plans to become an emergency room nurse: "Nurses can be very busy, and sometimes we focus only on the illness. But everyone has a life and a story. I want my patients to feel like someone took the time to listen to them, to make them feel less frightened and alone."

The need for this kind of care is only accelerating. A recent study by the Boston Foundation found that between 1990 and 2017, every one of the 147 cities and towns in the region saw an increase in the percentage of people of color. More than 90 percent of that growth comes from new immigrants, who, researchers point out, have been central to the region’s strong economy.

"At the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences, we provide students with the skills to be health advocates across the spectrum of care, including cultural competence," says Dean Shorts McShinney. "We want them to appreciate the importance of culture, and be able to help their clients navigate the health care world in a manner that resonates with their culture."

Dowling is fond of saying that "everyone has a nurse in their lives"—a caregiver who made a big difference at a crucial moment. "If you fully appreciate what nurses do," she says, "then you understand how important nursing education is. By investing in nursing students who reflect our nation’s demographics, we can help ensure a nursing workforce that better reflects the diversity, and the greatness, of our nation."

To support the Bring Diversity to Nursing Scholarship, please visit www.alumni.uml.edu/BringDiversityToNursing.
Mental Health by Design

Karen Roehr, associate professor of art & design, gave graphic design students the assignment to create a poster on one of three subjects: opioid addiction, social media overuse or mental health. “I wanted to show students the power of a poster and the importance of dealing with contemporary social subject material,” says Roehr, who also works as a graphic designer, illustrator and comic strip artist. “Designers can bring issues to public awareness, encourage a call to action and educate.”

The students’ work—shown throughout our “Why Are Today’s Students So Anxious?” feature story in this issue—presents a range of approaches to sensitive subject matter. German exchange student Elias Awad, whose poster is displayed here, says he wanted to communicate the ways in which social pressure impacts one’s mind in a very direct and simple way to bring more awareness and focus to this topic. Check out the rest of the students’ work in the story, starting on Page 26.

Features

The Legacy Scholarship

for UML Families Living Outside of Massachusetts

Annual scholarships up to $10,000 are now available for children and grandchildren of UML alumni who live outside of Massachusetts. For more information on applying, visit uml.edu/legacyscholarship

Applications for incoming freshmen must be received by March 1 for the coming academic year. Applications for incoming transfer students must be received by June 1.

Do you know someone who is interested in applying for this scholarship, but hasn’t applied to the university yet? Visit uml.edu/admissions.

Help Students When They Need it Most

Student Emergency Needs Fund

www.uml.edu/emergency

An urgent financial crisis can prevent a student from being able to earn a degree. The Student Emergency Needs Fund is there to help—whether it’s to help a student facing food insecurity or to provide financial assistance for a life-changing educational opportunity, like study abroad.
Masters of Disaster

BY GEOFFREY DOUGLAS

Last fall, Columbia Gas explosions rocked the Merrimack Valley. UML alumni led the recovery.

As head of a quickly assembled team of close to 5,000 workers, Joe Albanese ’84 (above, right) was responsible for every aspect of the recovery, from restoring gas to the homes to feeding and sheltering the displaced.
North Andover firefighter Matt Davis ’00 was off-duty just after 4 p.m. last Sept. 13 when the app on his phone flashed its first message: “All members, please respond.”

Across three towns in the Merrimack Valley, fires were breaking out, homes were burning, explosions were rocking neighborhoods. Confusion, then panic, took hold among residents arriving home from rush hour commutes to find their streets blocked off by first responders. Davis was among the dozens of firefighters from as far away as Boston and Manchester, N.H., who workednonstop until the next morning. “We were going house to house, checking on people,” he says.

They put out more than 80 fires in Andover, Lawrence and North Andover. The cause? A spontaneous buildup of pressure in the gas lines owned by Massachusetts-based Columbia Gas, causing boilers, and some entire houses, to explode. In all, one person was killed and another 20 were injured. More than 8,600 homes were evacuated. The fires were mostly out by nightfall, but the crisis was nowhere near over. Indeed, it was just getting started. Power was cut to all homes before the real cold came. If all this had happened two months earlier, it would have been a whole different operation.

Though numbers alone rarely tell the full story, in the case of Andover, the numbers are instructive:

- 3,000 lost homes impacted
- 2,200 RV trailers
- 500 space heaters
- 24,000 hot plates delivered
- 15,000 emergency generators delivered
- 1,000 space heaters
- 5,000 temporary total rooms
- 2,000 families in emergency housing
- 1,200 person emergency shelter

WEEK AFTER THE EXPLOSIONS, Columbia Gas brought in alumnus Joe Albanese ’84, a retired captain in the Navy’s Civil Engineer Corps and former commander of a team of Navy Seabees in the second Gulf War, to help. Albanese was chief recovery officer in charge of rebuilding efforts.

Albanese, a UML, graduate in civil engineering and founder and CEO of Waltham-based Commodore Builders, was given full command and control responsibilities over the repair of 48 miles of gas lines, as well as all other recovery-related logistics and services. The project was expected to take months. “It was an honor to be named, and I was humbled to be a part of it,” says Albanese. “But it was also an unprecedented challenge.”

There seemed little doubt in anyone’s mind that he was up to it. “I think we have a [Gulf War General] Norman Schwarzkopf figure here,” said Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera. A Columbia Gas spokesman, citing Albanese’s deep experiences, called him “a perfect fit for this mammoth task.”

Still, his oversight duties were many. As leader of a quickly assembled team of close to 5,000 workers—plumbers, carpenters, laborers, pipeliners and electricians—he was responsible for every aspect of the project, from restoring gas to the homes (and keeping them heated in the meantime) to feeding and sheltering the displaced. And all had to happen by an agreed-upon deadline of Dec. 16, less than three months after the work started.

“We were reacting against winter,” Albanese says. “There was an incredible sense of urgency. We had 50 percent more rain than usual for that time of year, and then a record-cold Thanksgiving weekend. The goal was to restore gas service and get people back in their homes before the real cold came. If all this had happened two months earlier, it would have been a whole different operation.”

And that’s not even mentioning the numbers that go with 5,000 workers repairing or replacing 48 miles of pipe:

• 30,000 feet impacted
• 5,000 space heaters
• 24,000 hot plates delivered
• 1,000 person emergency shelter
• 500 space heaters

The project was expected to take months.

But for all that was being done, as time went on, it became clear that a longer-range, top-down, centralized effort was needed.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE EXPLOSIONS, Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency, neighboring towns boarded up, schools and senior centers were opened to take in evacuees. On the UML campus, close to 100 affected students were offered help: housing in residence halls, food, clothing and school supplies, counseling services, even emergency funds for transportation. Several were moved into temporary housing.

Another three students, says Associate Dean of Student Affairs Anne Claudat, “had been displaced altogether, first to hotels and then to trailers, before finally being able to move back home months later.”

Just weeks before the disaster, the university’s EMS team had formalized a partnership with the Dracut Fire Department to coordinate the response to incidents in the area. When the Dracut FD was deployed to Lawrence on the evening of the explosions, it was joined by five members of UMass Lowell’s EMS: students Isabell Saal, David Finnberg, Colin Fitzgerald and Brittany O’Neil and alumnus Patrick Kiley ’18. The students helped with medical inventory management and logistics coordination at the command center, while Kiley served as logistics supervisor.

“We had things like code challenges and hazardous-materials issues that came up all the time,” Albanese says. “It was pretty crazy. Every day was different. You couldn’t plan for anything; you just had to deal with whatever came along. Kind of like building your fire engine on the way to the fire.”

At the request of the governor, the EMS team was deployed to Andover on the evening of the explosions to help with logistical coordination at the command center.

And that’s not even mentioning the numbers that go with 5,000 workers repairing or replacing 48 miles of pipe.

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22 UMASS LOWELL MAGAZINE FALL 2019
TIMELINE OF A TRAGEDY: EXPLOSIONS IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY

SEPT. 13, 2018

4:52 PM

Multiple suspected gas explosions and fires reported.

5:01 PM

Andover Fire Rescue Department stresses a 10-callRoboto response.

5:28 PM

State police shut off all roads at I-495 from Exit 42 through 45.

5:33 PM

Executives at senior center and mobile aid.

6:05 PM

Power restored to Lawrence, North Andover and Andover.

In each of the three affected communities, a handful of key players reported to Albanese. One of these, in Andover, was another UMass civil-engineering graduate—Chris Cronin ’87, the town’s public works director. His mandate during those weeks was critical.

“We had two main priorities,” he says. “To get the gas main replaced—it had been compromised, it was junk—and to get our people back in their homes.”

There were 700 mile-long roads affected, says Cronin, and over the course of the project, at least 200 construction crews were at work there.

“That’s a lot of backhoes banging into each other, and then all the other vehicles,” he says. “So much traffic, so much going on—it was crazy. I should have kept a diary.”

Almost every day, he says, there were tense meetings. “With Joe Albanese, with the governor, the DPW people, the plumbers, the town’s emergency center, the contractors—everybody was there. "With Joe—it was crazy. I should have kept a diary."

“We had to work around all that kind of stuff.”

A lot of people were just really scared,” Cronin says. “Not hard to understand. When you don’t have your house, you don’t have anything.”

Then there was the challenge of dealing with the fallout on the area’s children and seniors, its most vulnerable residents. Henry de Lima ’14, who came to UMass Lowell in 2012 straight from a tour in Afghanistan, is a social worker at Family Continuity in Lawrence, by far the largest, poorest and hardest-hit of the three communities affected (see related story, page 6).

All of de Lima’s clients are children, some as young as 5, and most are Latino. A few of the older ones, he says, had known the teenager, Leonel Rondon, who died sitting in a car in a friend’s driveway, when the house exploded and its chimney fell and crushed him. Some of them were pretty devastated,” de Lima says. “Kids that age have a hard time comprehending.”

But it’s the younger ones, he says, who have suffered the worst trauma.

“They were in their homes that were burned or destroyed. Or had neighbors who did. They’re little kids—they want to know, ‘Is my home going to catch fire again? Am I going to die? Is this house really fixed?’”

So it isn’t over yet—but considering the folks on the front lines, including so many with connections to the university, there is cause for optimism.

“We coordinated with our state agencies, worked with the nonprofits, arranged beds in nursing homes, got people fed from Meals on Wheels, found drivers to go around checking homes—just about anything you could think of,” she says.

The best part, she says, was how all the boundaries and work lines seemed to melt away.

“Everybody was stopping up of their little boxes,” she says. “You had a firefighter on medical leave cooking for people who didn’t have gas, heating formula for mothers, offering showers in his home to people without hot water. There were so many stories like that—finance people writing checks, HR people finding translators, everyone doing whatever it took. For a long time after the explosions, I wasn’t a CEO anymore. “It was amazing to be part of it, actually. Without that sort of teamwork, I can only imagine how bad things could have been.”

On Dec. 5, the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities announced that the final phase of the job—ensuring that roads are repaired, sidewalks repaired and graded, home furnaces replaced and heat and hot water restored—would be completed by Columbia Gas, at its expense, by no later than Oct. 31 of this year. There would be a new overseer now: Massachusetts company Nitsch Engineering, the largest woman-owned civil engineering firm in the state.

The company’s CEO and chairwoman, UMass alums Luma Brothers ’94, a registered professional engineer and member of the Advisory Board for both the College of Engineering and the Center for Women and Work.

The company, Brothers says, will be “monitoring Columbia Gas’ management of the remaining work—which will be completed by a new company, as well as as measuring progress, providing recommendations, ensuring compliance and keeping stakeholders informed.

“We coordinated with our state agencies, worked with the nonprofits, arranged beds in nursing homes, got people fed from Meals on Wheels, found drivers to go around checking homes—just about anything you could think of.”

“We definitely had our share of issues,” Albanese says. “A lot of people were shaken up, but it wasn’t only that. We had undocumented residents afraid of being exposed; there were the so-called ‘three-family’ dwellings that were really six-family. We had to work around all that kind of stuff.”

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So it isn’t over yet—but considering the folks on the front lines, including so many connections to the university, there is cause for optimism.

“You had a lot of really knowledgeable folks,” says Cronin. “And some of us were connected already—like Joe and I, with UMass Lowell—or had maybe worked together before. So there was a lot of trust. It didn’t matter who you were; there were zero egos involved.

“We coordinated with our state agencies, worked with the nonprofits, arranged beds in nursing homes, got people fed from Meals on Wheels, found drivers to go around checking homes—just about anything you could think of.”

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WHY ARE TODAY’S STUDENTS SO ANXIOUS?

> BY ED BRENNEN
WHY ARE TODAY’S STUDENTS SO ANXIOUS?

PEAKING TO 3,200 FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS at Convocation last September at the Tsongas Center, Student Government President Andrea DiFilippo offered some advice that’s as sage today as ever: Work hard. Get involved. Make the most of your college experience, because it will be over before you know it.

But there was another message baked into DiFilippo’s four-minute address, one tailored specifically for students of his generation: be mindful of your mental well-being when things get tough, and be sure to watch out for others, too.

“Mental health is one of the biggest skittles killers of our generation, and we cannot let it continue,” DiFilippo said, adding that it’s natural for students to ignore their problems or feel too ashamed to get help. “From one student to another, let me be the one to tell you that there are countless people at UMass Lowell—students, faculty and staff alike—who care and are here to support you.”

DiFilippo, a senior business administration major from Saugus, had done his homework as chair of the student government’s academic affairs committee, he helped survey nearly 1,400 UML students on their college experience. The survey’s findings were surprising to see how many students were concerned about mental health issues, especially anxiety and depression.

A common complaint was the wait time for a counseling appointment at the Wellness Center, which—to say so many college clinics across the country—was facing an appointment backlog as it tried to keep pace with surging demand.

DiFilippo presented the survey findings to Chancellor Jacquie Moloney and her executive cabinet in January 2018, and their response was immediate. “We have to change this. It will help,” DiFilippo recalls them saying. “It was awesome how they embraced it.”

To meet this growing need, the university boosted the number of counseling clinicians from four to seven at the Wellness Center. “It’s a big jump in terms of staffing and what we can offer,” Edelman-Blank says; “it’s not yet where I want us to be, but it’s a great start, and we’ve already seen that it doesn’t worry about us before, which is exciting.”

Those services include a new triage intake process to allow for same-day appointments. Now, students seeking help from Counseling Services for the first time can be seen within the past year. The numbers are tough to look at, but the suicide rate for people aged 10-19 increased by 56 percent between 2007 and 2016, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2011, for the first time in three decades, suicide surpassed homicide as the second-leading cause of death for teenagers (after unintentional injury such as car crashes). “In the past, there were concerns about students seeking care who would not report their depression or anxiety to counseling centers, it was surpassed by anxiety about five years ago, according to research by Penn State’s Center for Collegiate Mental Health. “Anxiety is basically worrying about something that could happen, and depression is about something that has happened,” says Edelman-Blank, who notes that there are three major types of anxiety: generalized anxiety disorder (worrying so much that it impairs your ability to function), social anxiety disorder (avoiding groups and constantly worrying about what other people think about you); and panic disorder (becoming so anxious that you have a major physical response).”

“It feels like a ton is coming toward you. It physically feels that scary,” Edelman-Blank says.

In a 2016 American College Health Association survey of 88,000 college students nationwide, two in five described being so depressed they “struggled to function, went to classes but felt overwhelmed during the week.” Most alarmingly, 12 percent of students said they seriously considered suicide within the past year. “The numbers are tough to look at, but the suicide rate for people aged 10-19 increased by 56 percent between 2007 and 2016, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

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Through Counseling Services, Colangelo also connected with a social anxiety therapy group. "You walk around campus, and you feel like everyone around you is normal, that they don’t have issues," she says. "It was really helpful to be in a room with people dealing with the same things."

With that in mind, Counseling Services introduced several new group therapy options this spring, including a mindfulness and meditation group and a support group for international students. The latter addresses the added stressors of language and culture barriers in college.

"Individual counseling is still our bread and butter, but our hope is to make group therapy a primary offering," says Edelman-Blank, who points out that one counseling counselor seeing 10 students at a time helps maximize resources. "And group sessions help in the context of addressing students’ isolation and loneliness, that lack of connection.”

"But—aren’t students today more connected than ever? Thanks to smartphones and social media, don’t they have hundreds of friends and followers with whom they can interact anytime, anywhere?"

"When you’re stressed or anxious to the point where you can’t function, can’t sleep, can’t eat, where you can’t go out with someone just to say hello, or you’re crying all the time, or you’re cutting yourself, that’s not just stress or anxiety from college. That’s disorder behavior."

"For most college-aged students, their brains are still developing. They’re still having difficulty seeing the dark side of social media taking hold, such as FOMO (fear of missing out). "I noticed students looking at what other people were doing and comparing themselves to those idealized presentations—the cool trips on weekends, having the right clothes or cars, poising the right way at Starbucks—and feeling like they’re not measuring up," he says. "The trickle-down effect of that is that people can develop anxiety and depression symptoms. They start to see themselves negatively, and their self-esteem changes.”

Armistead notes that with the latest phones and social media apps, high school seniors today are less likely to hang out with someone just to say hello, or you’re crying all the time, or you’re cutting yourself, that’s not just stress or anxiety from college. That’s disorder behavior."

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—Psychotherapist T.J. Dinsmore '04

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"To that end, about 50 faculty members from across the university gathered on North Campus on a gray Friday afternoon last November for a two-hour workshop on "Helping Students in Distress." Part of the Kennedy College of Sciences’ “Teaching and Learning Lunch Series,” the workshop was designed to help faculty members—who are experts in fields like mechanical engineering, finance and art history, but have little experience in mental health—learn more about their students’ mental health.

Kate Leguee, the university’s associate director of student conduct and prevention of violence, shared tips on how to recognize student distress (ability to focus, lack of motivation, flat affect and how to talk to them afterwards), how to access assistance (how to talk to a campus psychologist, support self-efficacy). Faculty members also learned more about STARTs (Students at Risk), the university’s behavioral intervention program."

"The influence of social media is what I think underlies this huge change in anxiety and depression in the last five to six years," he says. "I don’t think, noting that studies show girls are hit especially hard by social media pressures. He worries how it will affect his own 11-year-old daughter someday. "She doesn’t have a phone yet, and we’re going to resist that as long as possible,” he says."

Alice Frye, an assistant teaching professor of psychology, points out that smartphones and social media have their benefits, and adds that students are becoming more aware of their shortcomings. But she also has a strict no-device rule in her classes. “For most college-aged students, their brains are still developing. Their frontal lobes aren’t finished,” Frye says. "So I think that they are spending so much time on social media interacting with something that isn’t actually a human being—that’s worrisome.”

Unfortunately, the social media genie is out of the bottle (and probably has a million followers on Twitter). "The best we can do is try to help people have a good relationship with it, kind of like with alcohol," says Dinsmore, who’s had his own practice in Londonderry, N.H., since 2015. He encourages patients to be mindful of how much time they’re spending on their devices.

"When you are feeling that compulsion or impulse to pick up your phone, try to be aware of what was happening in your thoughts and emotions in the last half hour of your life,’ he says. "Why were you feeling the need to pick up the phone and check Facebook or Instagram? A lot of times, if you really work with somebody and keep them on task with tracking this stuff, it’s usually because, ‘Well, I was lonely.’ I was kind of bored. Or something happened earlier in the day that made me angry or anxious, and I was looking for a distraction.” So it’s almost like this tool that thwarts the natural emotional awareness process. People use it to numb, almost like a substance.”

FACULTY MEMBERS CAN SEE the pressure on the faces of students, who can often struggle with resilience. “Some students are just very, very hard on themselves,” says Frye, who points out that college has traditionally been a time when young people are given license to make mistakes and learn from failures. “But many learn from those failures if every failure is treated like the end of the world.”

So it’s important to help students struggling with anxiety and depression, so they can take full advantage of the developmental trajectory that lacks of connection.”

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College athletes, who face the added pressures of competition and maintaining their academic eligibility, are not immune from the epidemic. In fact, the NCAA’s chief medical officer, Brian Hainline, has declared mental health to be the No. 1 issue in college athletics. In May, UMass Lowell hosted the America East Conference’s fourth annual Health and Safety Summit, which focused on mental health.

In the College of Education, meanwhile, future teachers and school administrators are learning how to work with students struggling with things like anxiety or trauma. While issues like these used to be addressed by specialists outside of the classroom, Assoc. Prof. Phitsamay Uy says many states, including Massachusetts, are implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) into their curriculum standards, which teaches students life skills such as managing emotions and working through conflicts.

“Shearing social workers and psychologists in schools is great, but that’s the reactive end,” says Uy, who notes that teaching candidates are being trained to take a more proactive approach, “checking in with students as part of their daily class routine.”

Uy, whose research focus is on teaching diverse populations, says some students are surprised to discover how much more there is to teaching than coming up with lesson plans. “Sometimes they think, ‘My job is to teach math or history. What do I need to know about social emotional learning?’” Uy says. “But if a child is coming to you traumatized or emotionally unstable for any reason, they’re not ready to learn.”

FORTUNATELY, EXPERTS AGREE that anxiety and depression are both highly treatable. “They’re not things people have to plan to live with their whole lives,” Edelman-Blank says.

And the stigma around mental health issues, which DiFilippo addressed head-on during his Convocation address, also seems to be waning. “There is less of a stigma,” Dinsmore says, “but there’s definitely still a way to go until it is seen in a more normalized way, like a medical condition such as diabetes.”

While Colangelo initially worried what others on campus might think about her anxiety disorder, she came to realize that “everyone has their stuff” they’re dealing with. “I’m not ashamed of it at all,” she says. “Now it’s my thing. I deal with it.” In fact, it even spurred her to pursue a $1,000 honors fellowship to help Assoc. Prof. Ashleigh Hillier research the experiences of college students with depression, anxiety and other emotional and intellectual disabilities. After collecting and analyzing data from almost 200 students for more than a year, Colangelo presented her findings this spring for her Honors thesis.

“We’re hoping to find out more about what predicts anxiety among students, and figure out where the campus might be able to best provide supports,” says Hillier, whose early findings show that students who feel less connected to campus, such as transfer students, report feeling higher levels of anxiety.

Colangelo, who will begin pursuing her master’s degree in exercise physiology at UMass in the fall, is thankful she chose a school that provided her with the resources and opportunity to not only overcome her obstacles, but to thrive.

“As you grow up from freshman year to senior year, you realize everyone’s doing their own thing in college and has their own quirks,” she says. “Especially at a school like UMass Lowell, which is so big and so diverse, I feel it has such an accepting environment.”

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

UML takes a campus-wide approach to mental health awareness. Here are some of the programs and student groups that are here to help:

**STARs: The UMass Lowell Behavioral Intervention Team**

Faculty, staff and students who are worried about a student’s mental, emotional or social well-being can submit an online referral to the university’s behavioral intervention team, called Students at Risk (STARs). A collaborative team made up of representatives from the Dean of Students’ Office, Student Health Services, the Counseling Center, Disability Services, Campus Conduct, EMS and the UML Police Department meets weekly during the academic year to discuss the referrals. Typically, someone from Student Affairs then reaches out to the student to check in and offer help.

**Healthy H.A.W.K.S.**

Healthy H.A.W.K.S. (Health Advocate With Knowledge and Skills) is a volunteer student group that offers one-hour workouts at either the Campus Recreation Center or the Athletics Center. They bring therapy dogs to campus for “Paws to Play” events for students battling homesickness or stress, and they also host Stress Relief Fairs before finals each semester.

**Exercise is Medicine**

A collaboration between Campus Recreation, the Wellness Center and the Exercise Physiology Department, the program teaches students how exercise can improve their overall-well being by providing them with 16 personal training sessions—free of charge. Participants, who are usually referred to the program by Counselors of Services, are paired with certified student trainers for personally tailored one-hour workouts at either the Campus Recreation Center or the Athletics Center.

**Umatter2**

Umatter is a campus initiative that works to empower the university community to be proactive about suicide prevention, mental health and overall wellness. With the motto, “One Conversation Can Save a Life,” the group is committed to the emotional well-being of the campus community. uml.edu/umatter

**U Matter2**

College athletes, who face the added pressures of competition and maintaining their academic eligibility, are not immune from the epidemic. In fact, the NCAA’s chief medical officer, Brian Hainline, has declared mental health to be the No. 1 issue in college athletics. In May, UMass Lowell hosted the America East Conference’s fourth annual Health and Safety Summit, which focused on mental health.

In the College of Education, meanwhile, future teachers and school administrators are learning how to work with students struggling with things like anxiety or trauma. While issues like these used to be addressed by specialists outside of the classroom, Assoc. Prof. Phitsamay Uy says many states, including Massachusetts, are implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) into their curriculum standards, which teaches students life skills such as managing emotions and working through conflicts.

“Having social workers and psychologists in schools is great, but that’s the reactive end,” says Uy, who notes that teaching candidates are being trained to take a more proactive approach, “checking in with students as part of their daily class routine.”

Uy, whose research focus is on teaching diverse populations, says some students are surprised to discover how much more there is to teaching than coming up with lesson plans. “Sometimes they think, ‘My job is to teach math or history. What do I need to know about social emotional learning?’” Uy says. “But if a child is coming to you traumatized or emotionally unstable for any reason, they’re not ready to learn.”

FORTUNATELY, EXPERTS AGREE that anxiety and depression are both highly treatable. “They’re not things people have to plan to live with their whole lives,” Edelman-Blank says.

And the stigma around mental health issues, which DiFilippo addressed head-on during his Convocation address, also seems to be waning. “There is less of a stigma,” Dinsmore says, “but there’s definitely still a way to go until it is seen in a more normalized way, like a medical condition such as diabetes.”

While Colangelo initially worried what others on campus might think about her anxiety disorder, she came to realize that “everyone has their stuff” they’re dealing with. “I’m not ashamed of it at all,” she says. “Now it’s my thing. I deal with it.” In fact, it even spurred her to pursue a $1,000 honors fellowship to help Assoc. Prof. Ashleigh Hillier research the experiences of college students with depression, anxiety and other emotional and intellectual disabilities. After collecting and analyzing data from almost 200 students for more than a year, Colangelo presented her findings this spring for her Honors thesis.

“We’re hoping to find out more about what predicts anxiety among students, and figure out where the campus might be able to best provide supports,” says Hillier, whose early findings show that students who feel less connected to campus, such as transfer students, report feeling higher levels of anxiety.

Colangelo, who will begin pursuing her master’s degree in exercise physiology at UMass in the fall, is thankful she chose a school that provided her with the resources and opportunity to not only overcome her obstacles, but to thrive.

“As you grow up from freshman year to senior year, you realize everyone’s doing their own thing in college and has their own quirks,” she says. “Especially at a school like UMass Lowell, which is so big and so diverse, I feel it has such an accepting environment.”

UMatter2 is a campus initiative that works to empower the university community to be proactive about suicide prevention, mental health and overall wellness. With the motto, “One Conversation Can Save a Life,” the group is committed to the emotional well-being of the campus community. uml.edu/umatter

**Exercise is Medicine**

A collaboration between Campus Recreation, the Wellness Center and the Exercise Physiology Department, the program teaches students how exercise can improve their overall-well being by providing them with 16 personal training sessions—free of charge. Participants, who are usually referred to the program by Counselors of Services, are paired with certified student trainers for personally tailored one-hour workouts at either the Campus Recreation Center or the Athletics Center.

**Umatter2**

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At the end of last summer—after learning that the event would lead to many student scholarships—she decided it was “worth firing up the jet for.” Plus, Winfrey says, “it was a really good letter.” She confirmed the date on Sept. 7, giving the university a little over two months to pull off what most organizations spend the better part of a year preparing for: Hosting perhaps the world’s most influential and well-known woman.

The campus has had practice hosting big-name visitors, to be sure: The two guests who preceded Winfrey in the Chancellor’s Speaker Series were bestselling author Stephen King and three-time Oscar-winning actress Meryl Streep.

But Winfrey is in a league of her own. King and Streep drove themselves to campus, for Pete’s sake—and not just because they happen to live close enough. Winfrey, on the other hand, can’t take a step without the world noticing. Her every moment is accounted for, her every move clocked.

It’s safe to say that pressure was felt at UML. But we River Hawks thrive under pressure.

Do not underestimate the power of a handwritten letter. Of course, it helps if its author is the award-winning novelist Andre Dubus III. And, if you’re UMass Lowell, it helps if Andre Dubus III happens to teach in your English Department.

When Dubus wrote Oprah Winfrey a thank-you note after his novel “House of Sand and Fog” was featured on “Oprah’s Book Club” in 2000, she actually read it. More important to this story: She remembered it.

(“Of course I wrote her a note,” Dubus says today. “She quite literally changed my life.” He is referring, in part, to the fact that his book’s inclusion in Winfrey’s club, and his subsequent appearance on her TV show, played an important role in the millions of copies “House” went on to sell. It was a No. 1 New York Times bestseller, shortlisted for the National Book Award and transformed into an Academy Award-nominated film.)

Winfrey says she receives a surprisingly small number of letters from “Book Club” alumni, and so when Dubus reached out 15 years later to ask her for a favor, she recalled him fondly. Dubus spent three years going back and forth with her team, trying to persuade Winfrey to come to UMass Lowell as the featured guest in the university’s Chancellor’s Speaker Series.
LOOKING BACK NOW

Winfrey’s was her knowing that she would be doing a lot of good for young people who, in general, don’t have anything just given to them,” says Moloney. “Oprah shared so much warmth make me hope that one day, I can be that important person for someone else.”

Oprah didn’t miss the fact that the Oprah Effect lingered on campus and around the city for days.

“She saying was inspiring doesn’t do it justice,” says Moloney. “Oprah shared so much wisdom and kindness, and truly touched the hearts and souls of both this university and this city. And that was before she actually shocked us by matching the money we had raised. Words can’t express the impact. $3 million will have on students’ lives. We are so grateful.”

It appears to be mutual. The next morning, Dubus got a text from Winfrey. “I have a flip phone and don’t text—nor have I ever been on social media nor seen an emoji or a meme—but I can receive texts,” he says. “And the morning after that magical night, I got one from Oprah, telling me what a great night it was. She said, ‘Andre, is this you?’ And I said, ‘Yes, Oprah, is this the new you?’ I think she and Winfrey picked right up, he says. Unpracticed in the intricacies of replying to texts, Dubus pressed the call button instead and thanking me for being so ‘persistent.’”

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Dubus says that this belief, and that connection to the UMass Lowell story, was a factor in her decision to come to the university. “It becomes clear to me that what really got Oprah to come to Lowell was her knowing that she would be doing a lot of good for young people who, in general, don’t have anything just given to them,” he says. “It was hearing from us that she and her powerful influence would do only good things if she came here, good things for people who might very well need a helping hand now and then, young people who, like her, started out with little more than their dreams.”

Young people like Flore Stécie Norcéide, a junior who is studying biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major. Olivia Cheung, a biomedical engineering major.

“Why is it that Oprah came to Lowell? She was hearing from us that she should do good things for young people who might very well need a helping hand now and then, and young people who, like her, started out with little more than their dreams.” —André Dubus III

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**Oprah was here**

**4:30 p.m.** Event sponsors begin arriving at the Tsongas Center for a special reception and photo line with Winfrey.

**5:10 p.m.** Chancellor Meehan offers to escort Winfrey to the floor first, to make sure that she was not cold, but Winfrey suggests they go straight to the reception.

**5:15 p.m.** As Winfrey and Meehan walk through secured back halls of the Tsongas Center, Winfrey touches her arms along Meehan’s shoulders, waiting to see an on-screen talk. “That was a story about last summer, when I finished a three year being chaffing and taking stock about whether I should continue in the role,” Meehan says. “She reminded me to think deeply about what’s right for me and right for my community.”

**5:20 p.m.** About 200 sponsor reception guests queue up for the photo line. “I sent a note to announce from the podium,” says Events Manager Kathleen Sullivan. “‘There has a group lined up faster.’”

**5:25 p.m.** Winfrey enters the East Club Room and jumps right into the photo line, taking photos with those like her. “I want to make no money like that anywhere else,” she says.

**5:55 p.m.** Winfrey wraps up by waving students to lead with intention. “Amen, presents her with a UML hockey jersey with her name on the back.”

**6:00 p.m.** Winfrey wraps up her conversation with Winfrey.

**Nov. 15**

**2:30 p.m.** All doors at the Tsongas Center are secured; from the point on, any entry or delivery goes through the security team.

**3:00 p.m.** Winfrey’s motorcade of three black Cadillacs pulls up in the loading dock. (The previous day, Winfrey had flown from her home in California to Hanscom Field in Bedford, Mass.) As a team from UML escorts Winfrey to the entrance, Winfrey’s first thought is to give it up, because my father would say, “You don’t grow up to get some good, white folks like the Leonards.'” She says she wanted to come to UML, “in case of the complex cultural factors that she felt had shaped her life. “I had to be a schoolteacher or a secretary,” she says. “I would have had no dream or hope for a young, black woman.”

**3:22 p.m.** As part of her response to education major Janice Dubois, who asks Winfrey what she’d be like remembered about her mother figure to me) set her straight when she met my best friend, Gayle [King]. And she folks. Working for me.”

**4:18 p.m.** Dubois—knowing that Team Oprah has put together a sweep of the entire facility. The UMass Lowell police detail adds, “We told, we had 36 officers working that day,” says UML Lieutenant Melissa Mulrooney, who was assigned to “tools” Winfrey’s movements for the entirety of the visit. Winfrey also has her own security team shadowing her.

**4:22 p.m.** As part of her response to education major Janice Dubois, who asks Winfrey what she’d be like remembered about her mother figure to me) set her straight when she met my best friend, Gayle [King]. And she folks. Working for me.”

**4:35 p.m.** Winfrey says that when Dubois first asked her to come to UML, “I thought Why would I do that? It’s not like I’m going to be in Lowell.” She says she wanted to come because she heard that he wrote me after the book club was out that it was not the all about the monument. It’s the journey and every person you encountered on it.”

**4:38 p.m.** As part of her response to education major Janice Dubois, who asks Winfrey what she’d be like remembered about her mother figure to me) set her straight when she met my best friend, Gayle [King]. And she folks. Working for me.”

**4:42 p.m.** As part of her response to education major Janice Dubois, who asks Winfrey what she’d be like remembered about her mother figure to me) set her straight when she met my best friend, Gayle [King]. And she folks. Working for me.”

**4:47 p.m.** As part of her response to education major Janice Dubois, who asks Winfrey what she’d be like remembered about her mother figure to me) set her straight when she met my best friend, Gayle [King]. And she folks. Working for me.”

**5:00 p.m.** Winfrey wraps up her conversation with Winfrey.

**5:05 p.m.** Winfrey wraps up by waving students to lead with intention. “Amen, presents her with a UML hockey jersey with her name on the back.”

**6:00 p.m.** Winfrey wraps up her conversation with Winfrey.

**Run your own race. Never worry about what other people do or say because no one else is like you.”**
5:30 p.m. 
Alumni arrive for a reception in the Tsongas Club, decorated with handwritten quotes like “Surround yourself only with people who are going to lift you higher.” Some of Winfrey’s favorite foods are being served, including mini chicken pot pie, corn fritters, kale chips and caramel popcorn.

5:30 p.m. 
Winfrey says all reception staff if they’d like photos before she leaves.

Nov. 15 THE MAIN EVENT

5:00 p.m. 
As a bomb-sniffing dog does a final sweep of the building, the Media Relations team begins checking in members of print and broadcast media, including journalists from People magazine, The Boston Globe and Boston TV stations. (The event would later garner more than 15 media hits.)

5:30 p.m. 
Doors open at the Tsongas Center. Despite the fact that it’s freezing and snow is starting to come down, the line outside is still long. Nearly 6,000 tickets were sold.

6:45 p.m. 
Several people surge the stage to take photos on the set. “That was unexpected,” Moloney says today, laughing. “I was very nervous, and I’m not, honestly, very good at it.”

7:00 p.m. 
After an serenading DuBose (who cheekily describes her as “a voracious reader of some very fine books”), Winfrey walks on stage and shouts, “Hellooooo, Lowell!”

7:29 p.m. 
Winfrey mentions that she drives a Volkswagen. “If you’re in a fancy car, people notice that,” Winfrey says, alluding to reports after that her domestic partner, Stedman Graham, to stay at Nelson Mandela’s house in South Africa. They’d be there for 10 days. “I was very nervous, and I’m not, honestly, very good at it.”

7:37 p.m. 
Winfrey shares that she did not miss one show in 25 years of production of “The Oprah Winfrey Show.” Why? Because she thought it would ever change, and she thought it would make a difference.

Winfrey explains that the idea for the school she built in South Africa was born during that trip, when she and Mandela were sharing sections of the Sunday newspaper and the front-page story was about the extreme poverty in that country. She asked if she thought it would ever change, and she told him, “Education is the only thing that can’t be taken away.”

And so that casually mentioned that she had been thinking about opening a school. “By the next day or two, she invited the Minister of Education to over,” Winfrey says. “I said, ‘I’m just thinking about it’—but you ask Nelson Mandela’s house for 10 days, and you can’t give a candle.”

7:56 p.m. 
“I won’t be running for president—” Winfrey says. “I was just thinking about the speech,” she says, alluding to reports after that her deputy was presidential. Winfrey mentions the opportunity. “I’m looking for them, because everyone has coming telling me, ‘Ask her if she’s running for president.’”

8:20 p.m. 
Meehan, UMass Board of Trustees Chairman Rob Manning ’84, ’11 (H) and Chair of the Committee on Academic and Student Affairs Theatre at Lowell, walks on stage to present Oprah with an honorary degree. “An honorary degree is the highest honor you can bestow on an individual, and someone like Oprah’s it’s only honorary. It’s not an earned.”

Meehan adds, “She is earned through a lifetime of making a difference in this world. And I can tell you, I don’t think of anyone this university has ever given an honorary degree is who is more worthy than Oprah.”

8:31 p.m. 
Moloney announces that the school has raised more than $1.5 million for scholarships from Winfrey’s talk, bringing in the largest gift from one speaker on stage. Winfrey gives talks before she’s given until and uns for the students of UMass Lowell. “It’s my honor to meet each one of you,” Winfrey says, addressing the six students. “I read each of your letters. I was so moved by each of your stories that coming here and speaking and sharing this beautiful evening with you all, I wanted to do even more. I would like to match the $1.5 million—so that students like youake anes will continue in the path of the greatest, truest trust expression of themselves.”

“We are all working toward the highest, truest and most pure expression of ourselves as human beings.”
Innovations have been a defining value for him—at least since the day nearly 30 years ago when, as a young employee at Home Depot, he had the first of several life-changing “Eureka!” moments.

“It came to me that the garage door of a house was nearly always its largest opening, but also its weakest, and that if you could find a way to fortify that, he developed a career’s worth of breakthrough storm-protection products,” he says. “That sort of innovation, of dedication, determination to help new generations succeed because we share the same story,” says Chancellor Jacquie Moloney. “That’s the power of ‘Our Place’—this determination to help new generations succeed because we share the same story.”

For Rist, the decision was easy. “That sort of innovation, of dedication, determination to help new generations succeed because we share the same story,” says Chancellor Jacquie Moloney. “That’s the power of ‘Our Place’—this determination to help new generations succeed because we share the same story.”

In his mid-60s now, and with four decades of mounting successes behind him, Rist might expect that Rist would be easing off the gas. Instead, he’s pushing harder. He’s targeting $100 million in yearly sales, which he believes is achievable in as little as three years. But not without some adjustments: As the company grows and customer demand increases, greater specialization will be required, and perhaps also a consolidation of space.

“My choice of a major was operations management. He would be the first in his family to graduate from college.

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Comcast and UML: Wired to Succeed

>> BY DAVID PERRY

LAST FALL, CNBC’S RON INSANA stepped into Moloney Hall for the Annual DifferenceMaker Celebration. Insana was the main attraction for the sold-out event, which raised funds for the popular program that fosters student entrepreneurship. Then, a surprise: Dean Kamen, the New Hampshire-based engineer and Segway inventor, strolled in.

A SHARED WORK ETHIC

Dozens of UMass Lowell graduates work in Comcast’s Greater Boston regional office, according to the company, from entry-level positions to management.

Gallagher, a business management graduate who minored in computer science and math, is emblematic of one consistent trait over time for UML grads, and one Kamen emphasized that he sees in UML students: they’re hard-working.

“The students loved it. The next day, my email inbox was flooded with thank-yous from students,” says Holly Butler ’11, ’13, the university’s entrepreneurial initiatives project director, who oversees DifferenceMaker. “There aren’t many times the likes of Ron Insana and Dean Kamen are in the same room, and Ed and Comcast made that possible for our students.”

“I’m so appreciative for what UMass Lowell did in helping me launch a career. … Being involved as an alum has made me realize how blessed I was to be there.”

—Edward Gallagher ’84, retired senior vice president at Comcast Corp., shown here on campus with CNBC’s Ron Insana
The Benefits of Planned Gifts

Remembering UMass Lowell in your will or trust is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give to future generations of students. Planned gifts can also provide you with significant benefits as part of an overall financial plan. They can help you maintain control of your assets during your lifetime, take advantage of tax benefits, leave a legacy at UMass Lowell and possibly provide you with income during your lifetime.

For more information about making a planned gift and become part of our Legacy Society, contact the Office of Gift Planning at 978-934-4810 or ogp@uml.edu.

Folks notice Markus Sebastiano ’03. His art is big, modern and bold, a bridge between past and present. His studio is in a 3,000-square-foot space in a Lawrence mill. You notice his layered mix of media ingredients—everything from old newspapers to acrylics, stain, metal, spray paint, water and wood. He does some of the work in his father’s sheet metal and fabrication shop in Methuen. He got his start at UML, graduating with an art degree in 2003. He was known then as Mark Comeau. Friends had always called him Markus and his grandfather’s birth name was Sebastiano, so in branding himself professionally, he bridged past and present.

In art class, he was instantly smitten with Photoshop. “The art program was smaller when I was there,” he says. “It was easy in a way, because it was what I was really passionate about. I learned about Photoshop in my first design class and fell in love with the digital side of things. It’s a huge part of my work now.”

Sebastiano’s own career took off around 2014, after he’d worked in branding, graphic design and apparel. He now sells his art to corporate and private clients, and is commissioned by buzz-worthy restaurants and hotels to make art to fit each space. Sebastiano recently had a show in Los Angeles, and he’s taped an episode of a new interior design show for Bravo, to air in the near future.

Folks are noticing him all over the place now.—DP
MORE THAN 70 YEARS after textile chemistry grad student Y.L. Yang ‘48 paused for a photo in front of Southwick Hall, his daughter stood in the very spot. Marjorie Yang, chair of the $1 billion Hong Kong-based textile company Esquel Group, visited campus recently and talked to students about sustainability and social responsibility. “He didn’t go to MIT,” she said. “He chose to come here because this was the happening place. And I think, today, maybe we are going back to that.” [1]  

‘58 Francis Welch 

Established a career as a Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner.  

‘64 Vasant Jerevasi 

was awarded the 2018 New England Choice Award for Community Service at the New England Choice Awards ceremony organized by the Multimedia and NUCA New England News. Jerevasi was honored for his tireless work at Shiloh Bharati, a Massachusetts school dedicated to developing cultural pride and knowledge by introducing students to Indian arts, languages, customs, religion, geography, history and current events.  

‘69 Phil Terasa 

published two books this year. “The Manuscript of a World Letter” is a crime novel that began in Lowell and has place in a fictional town outside Boston, while “Bump Diamentle Washington” is a satirical account of Trump’s presidency.  

Judith (Souleter) Gostke reports, “After teaching English at Natick High School from 1989 to 2003, I retired. In 2009, Gary and I moved to Wellesboro, N.H., where we lived until last year, when we decided to sell our lake house and move back to Massachusetts to be nearer family. We keep busy with our grandchildren, yoga and golf, and travel to Stouler, Cuts, to see our son’s family. Retirement rocks!”  

‘70 Anne Tidwell 

A retired alumnus as a Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner.  

‘72 Claudia Yu 

PhD in Neuroscience and moved to Southwest Florida. She reports, “I’ve traveled extensively by sailboat and motor yacht along the East Coast, Bahamas and Florida coast. Many trips and tours of Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, Spain, Germany, Belgium, France, USA, Canada, Caribbean, Mediterranean and, of course, the Amazon River!”  

Venture Capitalist 

Christine Petrucci ‘74, ‘79 was featured in Guggenheim Online for her outstanding musical career. She is the founder of Soundcove Academy of Music in North Hampton, N.H., where she is the director and one of 18 music faculty members. She is also a member of the Yamaha Young Artists Program and enjoys the balance of her teaching and performance careers.  

Robert Cameron retired from teaching and is active as a tag-team.  

Denise (Seying) McGuade ‘79, ‘82 who earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing from UMass Lowell, was appointed president and chief operating officer of Banchman’s new Wellness Management division. She will work on building urban communities division, with a focus on health and wellness. Formerly vice president of post-acute care at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Mass., McGuade is also leading the development of a continuing care strategic plan for Beth Israel Lahey Health, a new 13-hospital health care network in Massachusetts.  

Michael Lane recently retired from administration at the University of Louisiana Monroe and accepted an endowed chair to teach accounting.  

Walter van Schaikwijk is a principal battery scientist at Microcell. He is also teaching as an adjunct professor of chemical engineering at the University of Washington.  

Norman E. Daucher was named CEO of the Hyde Collection Art Museum, a historic museum complex with a distinguished collection of art in Glens Falls, N.Y.  

Linda Tosney-Corr has left the world of pharmaceutical sales and joined the leadership of Rock Technologies Inc. as an account executive. She markets PRM’s services for Alliance Radialogics in Boston, the Monticello Valley and Southern New Hampshire. She resides in Belmont, Mass., with her husband, John, whom she met during college. She is now a vocalist for the ensemble conducted by Martins. The ensemble’s third full-length album.  

Rene LeClair is a vocalist featured in the Los Alamos Big Band, a 16 instrument swing band. LeClair has been singing since he was a child and a cantor at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. He has been featured in the Los Alamos Daily Post in New Mexico for his outstanding voice and participation in his greater community.  

Michael Miyamoto has been appointed director of the Department of Environmental Management in N.H.  

Kevin St. Cyr has been hired as senior vice president at Murphy McCormack Capital Advisors.  

Jason Ehelson ’80, ’87 has been appointed to the newly formed advisory board at Plymouth Rock Technologies. Following his retirement from his position as vice president of operations at Raytheon’s Integrated Defense Business in 2018, Ehelson will bring his expertise to the board as Plymouth Rock Technologies Inc. seeks to create and improve several threat detection and defense technologies.  

Kevin Laderoute ’82, ’83 reports that his son, Matthew, attends Columbia University and his son, Adam, is a student at UMass Lowell in plastics engineering.  

In 2020, we will be celebrating alumni with class years ending in 5 and 0—from five-year reunions to 45+. Look for information in your email and online as the year approaches: www.uml.edu/alumni/classof2020.
I would be easy to confuse Lorna Boucher ’86 for a UML faculty member. But the Lowell native is a familiar face in global financial securities company, however, the Lowell native is a familiar face in business administration at the Manning School. The basketball star was recognized for the North Atlantic Conference Women’s Basketball Player of the Year and was a three-time All-American. Amidst her career in basketball, Boucher also earned her degree in business administration at the Manning School. Boucher was named a member of the Manning School’s Hall of Fame in 2018.

A native of Boston, Boucher attended Boston College and played on the women’s basketball team for four years. After graduating in 1988, she joined the Boston Celtics as a corporate sales representative for the NBA. Boucher later worked for several companies, including MassMutual and the New England Patriots. She eventually became the executive director of the Boston Celtics Foundation, which supports youth programming and community initiatives. Boucher currently resides in Boston with her husband and two children.

Go to the article Go to the article
When they first met as students at UMass Lowell, Craig ’96 and Darcie ’95 Nuttall had a hunch they would be a good match.

Twelve years of marriage, two children and one life-changing event later, they discovered they’re not just a good match, but a perfect one.

In 2006, Craig, a software engineer, was diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease—at the ripe old age of 35. “Like most young people, I’d put off my annual physical, so the news came out of nowhere,” he recalls. Darcie, a mental health counselor and children’s book author, was equally stunned. “Craig has always been so active and full of life, it was hard to believe he was sick,” she says.

For the next decade, Craig managed his illness with a combination of medication, diet and exercise. But by 2017, his kidney function had plummeted to less than 20 percent, and it was clear he needed a transplant.

What wasn’t clear was when or how that would happen. Long waits are the rule when it comes to finding suitable kidney donors; in Craig’s case, so were long odds, because of his rare B-positive blood type.

Yet when his physicians did find a donor, they didn’t have far to look. For years, Darcie had assured Craig she would give him one of her kidneys. “I was so touched,” says Craig, but he also knew how unlikely it was that they would share not only the same blood type but also compatible antigens and antibodies, which lessen the chance his body would reject his new kidney. When the results of Darcie’s donor screening test came in, it showed she was a perfect match on all counts. Says Craig: “It was almost as though she willed it to happen.”

And so last July at Boston’s Tufts Medical Center, the Nuttalls shared something very few couples ever experience: back-to-back kidney surgeries. Not only were the operations successful, but the effects were immediate as Craig’s new kidney began flushing toxins out of his system. By that night, the color was flooding back into his once-ashen face.

“Right away, I felt like I got my husband back,” says Darcie. “It was kind of like going through childbirth, because we were both exhausted and in pain, but there was so much joy.”

Joy continues to suffuse the Nuttall household today, along with gratitude for their skilled surgeons and the large network of friends—some stretching back to the University of Massachusetts Lowell, Darcie’s alma mater—who cared for them during their convalescence and watched over sons Stephen and Jacob. Both Nuttalls have returned to work full-time—Craig as a senior software engineer at Philips and Darcie to her therapy practice and a flourishing at-home business making custom embroidered pillows. Best of all, Craig’s long-term prognosis is excellent. “And,” he adds, “I’ll always have a piece of Darcie with me.”

More than once, Darcie has found herself thinking of advice that Larry Siegel, UML’s vice chancellor for student affairs, once gave her: “He told me that everything is a steppingstone, even things we don’t expect. The trick, Larry said, is to take that experience and move forward.”

Craig’s illness, which once seemed like a boulder about to crush them both, has become, she says, “the biggest gift I could imagine. To see Craig healthy again is just amazing. When you’re busy with kids and a job, it’s easy to go on autopilot. You can miss the joy of everyday things. This whole experience has taught me to be awake and alive to what’s happening now, and to treasure it.”
When Tim DiFrancesco served as the head strength and conditioning coach for the Los Angeles Lakers, he worked with the likes of superstars Kobe Bryant and Steve Nash. “Preparing and training high-level athletes for six years was a rich and incredible experience,” says DiFrancesco, who earned a doctorate of physical therapy in 2006.

But he knew in his heart that he wanted to have an impact on more people’s lives during his career. “I realized that I wanted to use my skills, passion and experience to help more people than a 15-person roster get healthy,” he says.

So he left the Lakers to dedicate his career to his business, TD Athletes Edge, a fitness training facility located to his postdoctoral work at Yale University and her present speaker. “I literally apply everything that I learned at UMass Lowell almost every day,” says Dalphond.

Kate Meifung Tsui ’04, ’08, ’10, ’14 has been named co-founder and chief operating officer of ThruReach, a digital marketing company that she is married with two children. “I want to thank my husband for being my biggest cheerleader for pushing me to recovery beyond what I thought possible,” she wrote on Instagram last fall.

The Right Move

Meghan Martin ’04, ’12 has been named coach of the Danversport High School volleyball team. She is the head of the science department at Salem High School. Martin played college volleyball at UMass Lowell and has coached at many levels in the sport.

Brandon Kelly took a position as DPW director in Shirley, Mass. He previously worked as an engineer and foreman for the city of Lowell.

Kevin Gilles has been named principal of Kennedy Middle School in Waltham, Mass. He has spent 24 years in the Waltham school district teaching and, more recently, as assistant principal.

Jessica Hutenga ’05, ’12 has been appointed superintendent of Milford Public Schools after serving as interim superintendent.

Lorraine Tecconi-Moore has been named the 2019 N.H. Superintendent of the Year by the New Hampshire School Administrators Association. Her hard work and dedication were recognized at an event in March.

Elizabeth Odian has been named a partner at Hershey & Culbertson LLP. Odian, who practices in Chicago, Illinois, defends clients in the areas of labor and employment, consumer and class action and other litigation matters.
S

social studies and English teacher Michael Neagle '10 helps eighth-graders tackle real problems in their communities, like teen vaping and distracted driving. State lawmakers call them to discuss legislation. City councilors take their meetings.

It’s all part of Neagle’s civics curriculum at the Pyne Arts Magnet School in Lowell, where he teaches students about the three branches of government through hands-on programs. They learn about the legislative process through Generation Citizen, moving step-by-step to identify a problem, figure out a solution, and advocate for it. They learn about the courts through Discovering Justice, a mock trial program that culminates in them arguing a Bill of Rights case at the federal courthouse in Boston. They study the presidency and then hold mock presidential elections at school. They take on community service projects in an after-school club.

Neagle’s students graduate with the tool to exercise active citizenship. “Rather than learning about other people doing civic, they do it,” Neagle says. “We’ve had state legislators call here during class to talk to students about a bill on teen vaping.”

Last summer, Massachusetts updated its social studies standards to make the eighth-grade curriculum about all civic education—exactly what Neagle is already doing. He was recently selected to serve on the state’s Civics Assessment Development Committee and is already helping to implement the new standards in Lowell.

His pioneering work led to the 2017 Teacher Change Maker Award from Generation Citizen and the 2018 Don Salvucci Award from the Massachusetts Council for Social Studies. His students have won awards, too, including the Generation Citizen award for best civic action—outreach to legislators on funding for suicide awareness and prevention programs in schools—and best project in the state for their efforts to fund teen vaping prevention through an update to the state’s tobacco tax bill. Another teen vaping bill they sought, restricting the sale of flavored nicotine pods, has been introduced in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Yet Neagle calls himself “the least likely teacher you’ll ever find. Teaching wasn’t even on my radar in college,” he says.

At Malden High School, he pursued the trade track, with plans to become an electrician. His mom, says her “heart is in Brooklyn.”

“I first considered myself a writer, a poet even,” she says. “It’s the stuff of dreams and nightmares, thinking of all the work, the words and even the tears that have gone into making this book possible.”

Yet Neagle went on to earn an M.A. in educational leadership at Fitchburg State University and started another in Holocaust and genocide studies at Salem State University, where he studied communications and became the first in his family to graduate with a bachelor’s degree. The Mariner also inspired his love of history, travel and culture. Thanks to annual training trips with his cold-weather infantry unit to Estonia and Norway.

After graduation, he went to work for an educational travel company in Boston, where he arranged and led trips to Europe, Tunisia, Turkey, Australia and Panama for high school students. He kept studying, too, taking night classes in history at UMass Lowell and UMass Boston. Then he decided to earn a master of education in curriculum and instruction—and teach.

“Through the Marine Corps, I found out I was interested in history and travel, and through educational travel, I discovered that I love working with kids,” he says. “Being around young people is inspiring—I wanted to work with them full-time.”

A meeting with Prof. Patricia Fontaine ’96 was key to his decision to come to UMass Lowell. “She was fantastic, and very supportive,” he says.

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Fontaine recommended Neagle for the committee that advised the College of Education during its recent state reaccreditation. She also invited him to the professional development workshop where he learned about Generation Citizen—and then got him a small grant to fund his pilot project, bringing it to his middle school students. Neagle’s love of education doesn’t stop when he goes home at night.

Since earning his M.Ed., he’s completed a graduate certificate in history and educational leadership at Fitchburg State University and started another in Holocaust and genocide studies at Salem State University. “I’m a Waring learner,” he says.
**Teammates Once Again**

**FORMER RIVER HAWKS DEGROOT, KNEELAND**

Reunited by Miami Marlins

On a pleasant January morning at the Miami Marlins’ spring training complex in Jupiter, Fla., Manager of Player Development and Scouting Geoff DeGroot ’15 met with Cam Kneeland ’12, the organization’s new position player rehab coach, get acquainted with the facility and some of the people with whom he’ll be working.

Seven years earlier, as teammates on the UML baseball team, the roles were reversed. Back then, it was Kneeland, a senior third baseman, who took the freshman shortstop DeGroot under his River Hawks wing.

“Geoff was one of the guys I gravitated to,” Kneeland recalls of his former weightlifting partner. “We had a good connection.”

“Cam was probably the best player on the team that year, and he was a good role model for me to have because he went about business the right way,” DeGroot says. “I was very lucky to have him help me along, especially as a freshman coming from home for the first time.”

When they were playing side by side on the Lelouch Park infield in 2012, could they have ever imagined they’d one day be working for the same major league ballclub? “If you’d told me that Cam Kneeland would be working for a professional baseball organization, that wouldn’t have surprised me at all,” DeGroot says. “But us working together, that would have been a tremendous example on how to handle success.”

Last September, Kneeland caught up with Harring at the Miami Marlins’ spring training complex in Sarasota, Fla. “Have you talked to Geoff lately?” Harring asked. The last Kneeland had heard, DeGroot was working in player development with the New York Yankees. Harring told him that DeGroot was now with the Marlins, and that perhaps Kneeland should give his old teammate a call.

Before Kneeland knew it, the Marlins were flying him down to Florida for an interview. At UML, DeGroot had converted to pitcher his senior season, when he received the 2015 David J. Boutin Award, presented to the top male and female student-athletes of the year. The 6-foot, 185-pound right-hander signed a minor league deal with the Yankees that summer, which made every day different.

“Once I started playing professional baseball and saw what kind of talent there is, I quickly realized that I could have more of an impact on an organization in the front office, knowing my own personal skill set,” says DeGroot, who earned a degree in business administration (with a concentration in marketing) from the Manning School of Business.

The Yankees saw DeGroot’s front-office potential, too, and offered him a job in player development in 2016. “I spent all that time and effort getting a business degree — that was something that was always important to me,” says DeGroot, who went to work for Gary Denbo, the organization’s vice president of player development. “I’m fortunate that I can combine my love and passion for baseball with my business degree and put it to use.”

When Yankees legend Derek Jeter became CEO of the Marlins in 2017, he hired Denbo to run player development and scouting. A few months later, Denbo recruited DeGroot to join the staff in Miami.

“I’ve learned a lot by seeing how things work in a different organization,” says DeGroot, who works with the professional, amateur and international scouting departments in addition to helping manage the minor league system. “My responsibility is a lot broader than it was with the Yankees, which makes every day different.”

“I told the Yankees when they signed Geoff that he would be in the front office someday,” says Harring, who attended DeGroot’s wedding last year. “I’ve also said he will be a big league general manager and run an organization. He’s well on his way.”

While DeGroot helped Kneeland get his foot in the door for an interview with the Marlins, it seems Kneeland got the job because he deserves it. “We’re not in the business of just bringing people in because of favors or they’re your friends. We’re bringing people in because they can help us and make us better,” DeGroot says. “And that’s exactly what Cam will do. I have zero doubt about that.”

**John Williams is a professional artist living in Winchester, Mass. He creates complex collage portraits and landscapes using small pieces of cut magazine paper — in effect, `painting with paper` — and has done solo exhibitions in Florida, Washington, D.C., and many New England venues. He was featured on the cover of Folk Art Messenger, a revue published by the Folk Art Society of America, and on a book titled `Drawing Auburn.`**

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**’10 Sara Codair published her first novel, ‘Power Surge,’ which she worked on in a creative writing class at UML’s Lowell with Prof. Andrea Dubois. The book reflects a label-free approach to young adult and adult urban fantasy. The 17-year-old protagonist, Em, identifies as non-binary. Like Codair, the protagonist does not let depression, ADHD and anxiety stop them from doing what they want. The book launch was held at Jabberwocky Books in Newburyport, Mass., where ‘Power Surge’ is proudly displayed alongside Dubois’ newest novel, ‘Give Me Some.’**

**Krista Patronick ’09**

was named director of operations for the women’s hockey team at the University of Toronto. Corbacio played on the UML men’s hockey team during his time at the university, but the coaching, she says. She previously held a similar role at Colgate, and before that served as an assistant coach for the program eventually made the move to Division I.

**Dubus’ newest novel, “Gone So Long.”**

“‘Power Surge’ is proudly displayed alongside Dubois’ newest novel, ‘Give Me Some.’”

**Dubus’ newest novel, “Gone So Long.”**
Battling the Odds to ‘Plant a Seed’

The hardest part of his job is earning the trust of his clients, says Henry de Lima ’15. “All of them are children, some as young as six. Many are traumatized—too wounded or frightened to talk. Others have secrets to hide: an abusive mother, a drug-dealing brother, a father in jail.”

“The first job,” says de Lima, “is to build a relationship, to get them to open up to me, to share what’s happening in their lives. But they know the risks in that—that if they tell me someone is selling drugs, or putting them, or committing a crime, I have to report it. And that’s the end of the trust.”

De Lima is a social worker at Family Continuity in Lawrence, Mass., one of the poorest cities in the state. A native New Yorker, he moved to Lawrence as a teen, he says, “and I considered it home ever since.”

He came to social work after an 18-year career in the Army Reserve that included tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He was inducted last year into UML’s Military Alumni/Veterans Hall of Fame.

“Roughly half the clients de Lima sees are high-school students at a charter school, there because they’ve struggled to adjust to a traditional school setting. He visits the others in their homes. An in-home visit, he says, “is a step below hospital in-patient care—so we’re talking about kids with some serious mental-health and behavioral health issues, many of whom have already been hospitalized.”

“The kids don’t have skills because the families don’t have skills,” he says. “Often they’re held together by single mothers, who have their own tragic histories. And the parents don’t know any other way—it’s how things were when they were kids. Poverty is at the root of a lot of it. When you’re poor, you make desperate decisions.”

It’s hard for many of de Lima’s clients to have hope, he says. “It’s a tough job—heartbreaking sometimes,” he says. “And some of the time, it can feel like you’re taking in circles. But then there are those moments when you feel a breakthrough happening, when you can actually feel the air in the room grow lighter—and they can feel it, too. Those are the moments I live for. Those are the moments when I know I’ve at least planted a seed.”
The Trahan Seven
CONGRESSWOMAN FILLS KEY ROLES WITH UML ALUMNI

McKay Gallagher ‘18 was interning and studying for a semester in Washington, D.C., when she first heard of Lori Trahan, who was running for Congress in Massachusetts’ 3rd District. So when Gallagher, a political science major, returned to Lowell in 2017, she went to see Trahan speak at the iconic Owl Dirt. Everything Trahan talked about – reducing student debt, supporting public education, raising the minimum wage and improving health care – resonated with Gallagher, the daughter of a hard-working single mom. Although Gallagher was working her way through UMass Lowell with multiple jobs, she signed up as an unpaid campaign intern on the spot.

“I felt she was very genuine,” Gallagher says. “I said, ‘I want to help you!’” Gallagher, a Student Government Association senator at the time, was joined on the campaign by two UML friends: then-SGA President Lisa Degou and Alexandra Karabatsos ‘18, a former vice president. The three moved into off-campus housing together, working for Trahan every spare minute while juggling classes and homework. They brought home campaign projects to finish and brainstormed strategy until the wee hours. Sarah Keaine ‘17 often joined them.

“We’d be graphic designers for campaign materials in the morning, and in the afternoon, we’d be sending out mailers, dropping signs or figuring out a visibility strategy,” Gallagher says. “It was the ultimate chaos game. How do we get her message out to the most people?”

Their dedication paid off. They were part of the team that helped Trahan shoo out a 145-vote victory in the 10-way Democratic primary last September and is convince her against Republican Rick Green in November. Now all of them work for her full time. In Washington, D.C., where Gallagher is her scheduler, and Karabatsos is her legislative correspondent. In Trahan’s district office in Lowell, Gallagher is the staff assistant, and Keaine is liaison to the western part of the district, helping with con- sultant services, outreach and economic development.

These three alumni anchor the district office: District Director Emily Byrne ’02, ’14, Constituent Services Director Sara Khan-Ling ’09 and Valerie Stadler ’11. Their combined efforts appear to be working as the office has hired more staff and expanded to the northern part of the district.

Trahan’s UML connections are strong. She worked as former Congressman Marty Meehan’s chief of staff, helping to hire Byrne and Khan-Ling right out of college. Trahan mentored the younger women, and they stayed in touch even as Trahan moved to the private sector and Khan-Ling joined the community relations and family services team at the Lowell Police Department.

Byme stuck with Trahan when he left Congress to serve as UMass Lowell’s chancellor and then president of the UMass system. Still, when U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, Meehan’s successor, announced in the summer of 2017 that she would not seek another term, Byrne got the itch for politics again. A month later, Trahan jumped into the race. Byrne helped her out in her spare time, and after Trahan won, Byrne agreed to manage her district office— with Meehan’s blessing.

“The campaign got the fire burning in me again. It’s also an interesting time to come back into politics and to be part of a team with a woman leader,” Byrne says. “The campaign got the fire burning in me again. It’s also an interesting time to come back into politics and to be part of a team with a woman leader,” Byrne says. “I feel like I can have an impact, especially at this uncertain time in our country.”

Nicholas Giasullo has joined a member of the Plastics Pioneers Association. A former sales and marketing at DelTech Polymers and has been in the plastics industry for more than 42 years.

Nancy Carey ‘13, ’16 is a nurse practitioner at Glen Stacks in Taunton, Mass. She writes, “Very proud of my daughter, Carnie Hill, a student in the UMass Lowell Honors College, Class of 2022.”

Kelsey Harper accepted a new job at Jounce Therapeutics. A technical services specialist. She also serves as an outstanding professional on the board of directors for the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science and a part time medical laboratory scientist at New England Baptist Hospital in Boston.

Victoria Laureano and Nicholas Giasullo ’14 got engaged in front of Lowell’s Children’s Village in the Mill, in the exact place they met as students. They were part of the team that helped Byrne and Khan-Ling join the community relations and family services team at the Lowell Police Department. They were part of the team that helped Byrne and Khan-Ling join the community relations and family services team at the Lowell Police Department.

Ashley Fortier is an acquisitions assistant at Tantor Media.

Mary Foley is enrolled in UMass Lowell’s Fast Track Program to earn an M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction. She continues to work at UML as a Writing Center tutor, aiding students from all majors and backgrounds.

Kayla Hallet passed the NCLEX-RN exam and recently admitted to the Massachusetts Army National Guard.

Ryan Jewell graduated from the police academy and has been hired as a police officer in Framingham, Mass.

Tri Mi ’15, ’18 is working as a data scientist at MPS Investment Management.

Alessandro Mora is a senior scientist helping us off the development at Joanne Therapeutics.

Nidhi Belur is working at Intel Corp., as a network software development engineer.

Daniel Krikorian and James Tohey, a current UMass Lowell student, have teamed up to launch a new digital media network to cover obstacle course racing on a global scale. Their company, OGrad Media, explores the crave of obstacle course racing by companies like Spartan Race, Tough Mudder and Warrior Dash. They are now launching content on popular applications like Amazon Prime, Hulu, Netflix, HBO, Disney and Roku.

10. 11. 12. 13. DANIEL KRIKORIAN ’17 AND JAMES TOHEY

11. NICOLAS GIASULLO ’14

DARA SIVY ’17

NICHOLAS GIASULLO ’14 AND VICTORIA LAUREANO ’10

12. 13. DANIEL KRIKORIAN ’17 AND JAMES TOHEY

FALL 2019

CLASS NOTES

CLASS NOTES

UMASS LOWELL MAGAZINE
8. From left: Brian Phillips ’75, Dennis Hollis ’71, Barry Chenal ’79 and Michael Ralston ’74 enjoy some pregame fun at a Red Sox vs. Phillies game in Philadelphia.

9. Barry Grom ’10, Liz Dagle, Craig Dagle ’08, Lynn McCarthy ’13 and Gregg McAuliffe ’79 gather at a reception in Los Angeles to meet fellow alumni in the area and enjoy food and conversation. 

10. Michael O’Neill ’82, ’83, Tony Caputo ’73, Dr. Caputo’s Majic Westerdien and Kevin Shanahan ’71 spend the time together at an alumni and friends event in Pittsburgh hosted by Tom ’77, ’80 and Dane ’94 O’Connor.

11. Skip Hildridge ’74 and Darleen Hildridge pause while mingling with other UMass Lowell alumni at the second annual Southern Maine Alumni Reception at the home of Chris Finnery ’98 and Meghan Mahoney.

12. Alumni and friends gather at Kyle Field in Colorado Springs to discuss enhancing programming in the area. From left: Executive Director of Alumni and Donor Relations Heather Malese Allen ’85, ’06, James DiPane, Stephanie DiPane ’11, Michelle Hollstrom, Stephanie Hollstrom ’10, Senior Lab Manager for Biological Sciences Rizvana Bhaiwala, Jeffrey Moore ’91, ’93, Karen St. George ’94, George ’94, Kevin Goddu ’16, ’18 and Mark Sampson ’88.

13. The College of Education celebrated the milestone anniversary of the UML band. From left: Aaron Marchessault ’00, Dean Eleanor Abrams, Dean Luis Falcón, Jacquie Moloney ’75, ’92; Joan Marchessault ’75, ’92; Dean Elias Almeida, Dean Luis Falcón, Richard Hoffmann ’90, Maria Miller ’90, ’92, Ana Mac, Prof. Iman Chahine and Asst. Prof. Jack Schreider.

14. At the grand reopening of Perry Hall, Barry Perry ’58, ’59 and members of his family center, are joined by students Massachusetts Life Sciences Center President and CEO Travis McCready, Mayor Joseph O’Shea and William O’Shea ’69, ’03 (H), Chancellor Jacquie Moloney, Edward Moloney, Elizabeth O’Shea and William O’Shea ’93, ’00 (H).

15. At the Biological Sciences 50th anniversary celebration, guests check out historical photos. From left: Senior Lab Manager for Biological Sciences Riaz Shahid, Jeffrey Moore ’91, ’93, George ’94, Karen Moore, Keith Mikule ’92, ’93 and Jennifer Sullivan ’91, ’93, Senior Lab Manager for Biology Jennifer Sullivan ’91, ’93, Senior Lab Manager for Biology Jennifer Sullivan ’91 and Julie DeZutter ’10, ’12 (H).


CELEBRATION & MILESTONES


12. At the Celebration of 50 Years of Nursing event, 50 nurses were honored. Pictured here celebrating are Assistant Dean Pauline Laliberte ’74, Dean Emelita Jan Bleich and Kevin Whitney ’96.

24. Enjoying the UML vs. UMass Amherst game, at which Governor Charlie Baker dropped the puck (and which the River Hawks won, 2-0), are, from left, Sarah Lincoln ’15, Thomas Emery ’15 and Fahmina Zaman ’14, ’16, Chancellor Jacquie Moloney ’75, ’92 and Larry Acquarulo ’81.

25. College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Chancellor Jacquie Moloney ’75, ’92 and Baker.


27. Sigma Phi Delta sorority brothers (from left) Julie Gualtieri ’10, Robert Mulholland ’10, Miss Jamie ’10 and Aneisha Copeland ’10, front row, from left, state Rep. Tom Golden ’93, ’01, chairman of the Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Innovation Julie Chen.


29. Asst. Prof. Erica Steckler, Asst. Prof. John Cluverius, Assistant Dean Emeritus Frank Talty ’77, ’79 and Asst. Teaching Prof. Amy Sneed pose for a photo after the Political Science Faculty Showcase.

30. Alumni and friends connect at the Model UN and International Relations Club Alumni Hockey Night, with proceeds from the event benefiting the program’s activities. From left Library Systems Administrator Paul Nutter ’06, Associate Director of Academic Services Operations David D’Iscoll ’94, Emeritus History Professor Dean Bergeron, Stephen D’Iscoll ’20 and Betsey D’Iscoll.

31. UMass Lowell and Greentown Labs announced a partnership focused on renewable energy. Shown at the announcement are, from left, state Rep. Tom Golden ’93, ’01, chairman of the Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Innovation Julie Chen.

32. Among other young UML alumni, Sunny ’10, ’12 Yang and Micaela Yang cheer on the Red Sox vs. the New York Mets.

33. At the Oak and Iron Brewing Co., front row, from left: Alex Warmouth, Assoc. Prof. Ellen Bazin ’94, ’99 and Bill Cox ’81 socialize and network. 34. Student Alumni Ambassadors and young alumni cheer on the men’s basketball team as they play against University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Back row, from left: Jenna Freitas ’11, Fahmina Zaman ’14, ’16 and Macara Yung.

35. Sigma Phi Delta sorority brothers (from left) Julie Gualtieri ’10, Robert Mulholland ’10, Miss Jamie ’10 and Aneisha Copeland ’10.


37. Sigma Phi Delta sorority brothers (from left) Julie Gualtieri ’10, Robert Mulholland ’10, Miss Jamie ’10 and Aneisha Copeland ’10.

38. Alumni, friends and future River Hawks gather for an adventurous afternoon at the Purgatory Chasm State Reservation Hike in Sutton. From left, state Rep. Tom Golden ’93, ’01, chairman of the Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Innovation Julie Chen.

39. Sigma Phi Delta sorority brothers (from left) Julie Gualtieri ’10, Robert Mulholland ’10, Miss Jamie ’10 and Aneisha Copeland ’10.

40. Alumni, friends and future River Hawks gather for an adventurous afternoon at the Purgatory Chasm State Reservation Hike in Sutton. From left, state Rep. Tom Golden ’93, ’01, chairman of the Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Innovation Julie Chen.
Alumni Events Calendar
For more information, or to register for events, visit www. alumni.uml.edu.

SEPTEMBER
10TH ANNUAL PLASTICS ENGINEERING GOLF TOURNAMENT
Friday, Sept. 20
1 p.m., Shotgun start
Connecticut National Golf Course, Putnam, Conn.
Enjoy a day of camaraderie and fun while playing golf with fellow Plastic Engineering alumni, faculty, friends and industry partners. The event benefits PL Lab and UML’s Plastic Engineering students.

LATINO HERITAGE MONTH ALUMNI AND STUDENT NETWORKING
Wednesday, Sept. 25, 6-8 p.m.
University Crossing, Moloney Hall
Alumni and students will gather for the celebration of Latino Heritage Month with a night of socializing and networking.

OCTOBER
125TH ANNIVERSARY INCLUDING OUR CELEBRATION OF PHILANTHROPY
Thursday, Oct. 17, 6 p.m.
U Mass Lowell Inn & Conference Center Chaceon’s Leadership Society members, loyal donors and the current members of UML’s Philanthropy giving societies are honored for their generous support during this annual event.

125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION RECEPTION AND DINNER INCLUDING OUR CELEBRATION OF PHILANTHROPY AND UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AWARDS
Thursday, Oct. 17, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
U Mass Lowell Inn & Conference Center
Homecoming week kicks off with UMass Lowell’s 125th Anniversary Celebration! We started small, worked hard and today we are one of the fastest-growing public research universities in the country. Join us in celebrating our accomplishments to date. There will be cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, dinner, honors and awards. Limited tickets available.

RIVER HAWK HOMECOMING WEEKEND CELEBRATING 125 YEARS
Oct. 18-20
Alumni, students, faculty and staff friends gather for a weekend full of entertainment, reunions and family fun.

UNL DAY OF SERVICE
Saturday, Oct. 19
Join alumni and students in giving back to the Lowell community before heading to the homecoming festivities.
Students are no longer required to take physical education, and there isn’t a hang gliding club on campus for them to test their nerve. But thanks to the university’s Campus Recreation program, today’s students have more opportunities than ever to work out, play a club or intramural sport, or just get out of their comfort zone. The popular Outdoor Adventure Program offers local skydiving, sailing and mountain biking excursions, as well as annual hiking trips to the Grand Canyon (as seen here) and sea kayaking trips to Florida. “It’s a great way for students to recharge and enjoy the outdoors,” says Kevin Soare ’05, assistant director of the outdoor and bicycle programs, whose mission is to “support the development of healthy, balanced lifestyles for the UML community through outdoor recreation activities.” Soare can’t imagine the university ever offering a hang gliding club again, but he and his staff are constantly finding new ways to help students get their blood—and adrenaline—pumping.
Don’t miss this event-packed weekend filled with entertainment, family fun and opportunities to reunite with friends and classmates. Alumni, students, parents, faculty and staff, friends and the community are all invited.

OCT. 17-20, 2019

HOMECOMING FEATURES

- River Hawk Way Homecoming Festival
- Reunion Celebrations for Those with Class Years Ending in “4” or “9”
- Jennifer’s 5K Run/Walk
- Community Service Day
- Live Music
- UML Hockey
- Athlete Alumni Celebrations
- Division I Games
- Parent & Family Reception

uml.edu/homecoming